



Burgess Hill Pantry

Update to BHTC Strategic KAG

August 2023

Introduction

Thanks for taking the time to read this brief report on the progress of Burgess Hill Pantry. We hope you'll find it informative about our achievements, our aspirations and the challenges we perceive in continuing to grow our service for Mid Sussex.

Kind Regards, Joseph Foster
Chair of Trustees

Service Update & Progress

We continue to see consistent and growing demand locally. Despite a significant increase in service delivery (Fig 1 - Visit Numbers), we continue to experience increased demand. Reacting to this, we have opened the service on a Saturday for the first time, to both provide more capacity, to make the service more accessible and diverse, and to make best use of the available short dated food resources.

Fig1. Table Showing Number of Visits by Members Per Calendar Month from Nov 22 to July 23

Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	March	April	May	June	July
291	374	324	315	385	322	353	391	342

We currently have 180 members representing 306 adults and 217 children and a waiting list of 50. All data correct as for the 11/7/23

The Pantry has a food rating of 5 and is due for an inspection in September 2023.

Suppliers

Our stock comes from three main sources:

- Donations of food from individuals, businesses and food banks such as Consort Frozen Foods
- Surplus food - via retailers - Waitrose, Marks and Spencer and Tescos who donate stock that would otherwise be destined for landfill.
- A weekly delivery of food from Fareshare Brighton & Sussex
- Purchased stock. The Pantry has a budget of £1250 monthly for the purchase of stock to ensure that our members have a good range of items including staples to choose from.

Stock remains our biggest brake on capacity, so we continue to explore new sources of food. We are extremely grateful for the support of many local people and businesses

Staff and Volunteers



The Pantry has one paid member of staff, the Pantry Manager working 22.5 hours a week, a board of trustees and 30 volunteers who run shopping sessions, collect donations and fundraise giving over 80 hours of volunteer time per week.

Earlier in the year we have run a full day training session for volunteers to bring them up to date with pantry policy, to train them in safeguarding & other critical processes, and invest in their development. Our team of volunteers is one of our biggest assets and we're committed to supporting them as best as we are able to find their role fulfilling and enjoyable.

Looking to the Future

We recognise that there is significant unmet demand locally. Our waiting list remains stubbornly existent despite all efforts so far to decrease it. Being mindful of this and continued cost of living pressures, we also have identified some opportunities to grow the service:

- Experiment with ways of supporting a larger range of users. Our objective is to ensure we're helping as many people as possible, so we will consider a variety of approaches to do this including associate membership, adjusting the number of visits per month
- Investigate opportunities to expand by providing a community space, in conjunction with the new tenant of Trading Spaces, to offer development and support resources, partnering with other agencies, e.g. IMPACT, Clarion Foundation. This might include things such as CV workshops, Cooking Courses, Job Coaching and more
- Increase sources of food. Currently the biggest limitation for growth is on food supply. We already have an intensive food collection organisation via committed volunteers collecting and dropping off food. We are aware that a number of collections locally from larger sources such as Tesco, Lidl and Waitrose are going to other organisations, sometimes to other areas. We will need to build delivery capacity accordingly to allow us to widen the sources of food, ensuring we can conveniently collect from businesses

In order to do this, we need to obtain additional resources, as well as manage some risks:

- **Space**
 - Currently located in trading spaces, we have recently taken possession of an additional unit in Trading spaces. This is vital to allow us to store

more food, flattening out spikes in demand and allowing for more bulk buying, making us more efficient

- Despite this, space remains a concern. The relative insecurity of tenure in trading spaces means we need to carefully consider fabric investments. Additionally we could be asked to move at relatively short notice which would be very disruptive to the service
- Need: Identify and secure a suitable, long term, secure location for the pantry meeting our needs and ensuring we have a stable base for the service

- **Food Supply**

- Increase our food supply - Obtain access to a van, either through increase funding for van rental, or possibly purchasing a vehicle.
- Partner with local organisations to leverage their delivery capabilities to collect and drop off food [must be temp controlled appropriately]
- Increase funding to allow us to purchase more food on a monthly basis
- We are considering a small increase in membership fees as recommended by Your Local Pantry. This ensures the pantry concept of being a multiplier of budgets stays in effect, and ensures that the ratio of income to expenditure remains within recommendations. This allows us further funding flexibility for food, especially in lean months.

- **Grow the team**

- We need to ensure we continue to grow our teams to support the demand and ensure we have a sustainable team. This is particularly true of the delivery team at the moment.
- We are growing our board of trustees by adding new trustees in August 2023
- In the medium term, we may wish to consider additional staff hours. We have a strong ratio of staff hours to volunteer hours, so we know that appropriate investment in staffing pays off with a multiplier effect

- **Grow our geography**

- We already have a number of members from Hurst and Hassocks (similar to Burgess Hill Food Bank) and Haywards Heath. There may be an opportunity to grow our service in surrounding areas
- In the long term, we may wish to consider a mobile pantry service for more remote locations and those unable to travel to the pantry.

- **Funding**

- Through donations and grants from a range of sources we have stabilised and grown our income to support current needs
- To grow, we aspire to approximately our fundraising from £30,000 to £90,000
- This will give flexibility to hire space, to purchase new assets such as vehicles, and invest in more staff time to grow capacity. It will also help us augment food supplies allowing us to grow capacity directly.
- We have grown our networking with local businesses and now have a range of relationships with businesses in the community, as well as Burgess Hill Business Parks Association. We have received support from

a range of companies such as RF solutions and Mid Sussex Porsche. The support of the local business community is warmly welcomed and a critical part of diversifying our funding.

Our Impact

We include two addenda to this report; one is the social impact report from Your Local Pantry, which shows the overall impact of the pantry network (we await our own report from YLP). We also have recently conducted a basket survey which shows the value of a basket to users.

Some comments from a recent set of client interviews:

"We are a low income family with universal credit top up. Both adults are working. Since we have joined we can afford more for our children; e.g. better school shoes, the occasional ice cream as a treat"

Mother, Age 35, Family of 2 Adults, 3 children

"Its a joy to come. There is always a friendly hello, and I meet others in the same situation as myself"

Pantry member, Age 58